

01975

1968/02/10

CITE: MAG 1981

10 FEBRUARY 1968

DTG : 101114Z

FROM: GENERAL WESTMORELAND COMUSMACV SAIGON

TO : ADMIRAL SHARP CINCPAC HAWAII

INFO: GENERAL WHEELER CJCS WASH

DECLASSIFIED
 E.O. 13526, 13526
 DATE 10-17-80
 BY *Scit* 1-17-80

REF: CINCPAC 090359Z.

1. THE ENEMY'S CURRENT EFFORTS DO NOT ARGUE FOR A TIME-CONSUMING STRATEGY IMPLICIT IN THE OBJECTIVE OF ATTRITING ARVN FORCES. ALL EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT THIS IS AN ALL-OUT, SHORT-TERM EFFORT. FURTHER, THE ENEMY DID NOT TARGET ARVN FORCES IN THESE RECENT ATTACKS. INSTEAD, HE HIT GVN CONTROL FACILITIES SUCH AS GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, RADIO STATIONS, PROVINCE CHIEFS' HOUSES, AND THE LINE. HE APPEARED CONTENT TO CONTAIN ARVN MILITARY FORCES RATHER THAN DESTROY THEM, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE SUFFERED HEAVY LOSSES WITH ALMOST 2000 KIA TO DATE. AIRFIELDS AND AIRCRAFT WERE HIS PRIMARY MILITARY TARGETS.

2. WHILE IT IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE THAT THE ENEMY BUILDUP IN THE KHE SANH-DMZ AREA IS A DIVERSION, I CONSIDER THIS POSSIBILITY REMOTE. HE HAS PUT TOO MUCH EFFORT INTO THAT BUILDUP TO SUPPORT THE DIVERSION THEORY. TWO DIVISIONS WERE DEPLOYED FROM NVN PLUS HEAVY LOGISTICAL SUPPORT, SOME OF WHICH HAS BEEN DESTROYED BY AIR AND ARTILLERY. HE HAS LOST

OVER 400 MEN BY BODY COUNT IN THE KHE SANH-DMZ AREA, AND PROBABLY A GREAT DEAL MORE FROM CONCENTRATED FIRE POWER. IF DIVERSION WAS THE ENEMY'S AIM, IT CERTAINLY WAS A POOR STRATEGY. IN THE FIRST PLACE WE HAVE NOT DISPATCHED LARGE FORCES TO THE KHE SANH-DMZ AREA. SECONDLY, HE "DIVERTED" ENOUGH ADDITIONAL US STRENGTH TO QUANG-TRI, FOR INSTANCE, TO BRING ON A CRUSHING DEFEAT TO HIS FORCES ATTACKING THAT CITY. HE STILL INTENDS TO MAKE KHE SANH ANOTHER DIEN BIEN PHU, AND FROM THERE TO SEIZE ALL OF THE TWO NORTHERN PROVINCES.

3. I SHARE YOUR CONCERN AS TO THE ENEMY THREAT TO SAIGON. WE MUST NOT ONLY PREVENT THE ENEMY FROM ACTUALLY TAKING SAIGON, BUT WE MUST ALSO KEEP HIM FROM HARASSING AND BLOCKADING THE CITY OVER A PROLONGED PERIOD THROUGH THE PRESSURE OF HIS FORCES IN AND NEAR THE CITY. I VISITED GENERAL MEYLAND TODAY, AND HE IS CONFIDENT (AS I AM) THAT WE CAN HANDLE THE MILITARY THREAT TO SAIGON. LOCAL FORCES INDIGENOUS TO THE SAIGON AREA CAN ALWAYS INFILTRATE INTO THE CITY. THIS IS A FACT OF LIFE WE SIMPLY HAVE TO ACCEPT. WHILE IRRITATING, THESE LOCALS CAN AND WILL BE ERADICATED. THE MAIN FORCE THREAT IS NOT AS FORMIDABLE ON THE GROUND AS IT APPEARS ON THE MAPS. THE 5TH VC DIVISION HAS BEEN GIVEN A GOOD MAULING AND IS PROBABLY ABOUT 50 PERCENT COMBAT EFFECTIVE. THE 9TH VC DIVISION HAS

ALSO BEEN HURT IN A SERIES OF CONTACTS NORTH OF SAIGON. WE ESTIMATE THAT THIS DIVISION HAS THE EQUIVALENT OF ABOUT 5 OR 6 COMBAT EFFECTIVE BATTALIONS. THE 7TH NVA DIVISION MAY, OF COURSE, ENTER THE FIGHT IN SAIGON BUT IT HAS A "NO WIN" REPUTATION. IT HAS ALSO BEEN HEAVILY ENGAGED IN THE OUTER REACHES OF BINH DUONG ALTHOUGH THE 101ST REGIMENT IS IN THE SAIGON AREA AND WILL PROBABLY BE USED WITH THE 9TH VC DIVISION.

4. I DO NOT DEPRECIATE THE THREAT TO SAIGON BOTH FROM INFILTRATION AND MAIN FORCE ATTACKS. IT IS REAL, SERIOUS, AND I AM CONCERNED ABOUT IT. TIME, HOWEVER, IS ON OUR SIDE. WE DAILY FREE TROOPS IN II FFV TO MOVE TO THE DEFENSE OF SAIGON AND TO OPEN THE ROUTES AROUND THE CITY. THE LATTER IS THE TRANSCENDING PROBLEM. REGARDS.